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Chapter 1 Newsletter

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Comparing Diagnosis—Prescription and Tutoring: What the Research Says

Chapter 1 federal law specifies that each Chapter 1 program must “determine the needs of participating children with sufficient specificity to ensure concentration on those needs” and Montana Chapter 1 programs are required to write an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) based on diagnosis for each student served in the program. The intent of these requirements is to promote a diagnostic-prescriptive approach to Chapter 1 instruction, and Chapter 1 instructors are discouraged from serving only as “homework help” to students. But why is a diagnostic-prescriptive approach preferred over tutorial help for students?

A recent computer inquiry for information on diagnostic-prescriptive instruction and tutoring produced fourteen research studies: seven diagnostic-prescriptive studies and seven studies of a tutorial approach. The ages of students ranged from fourth grade through high school in both remedial and regular classroom settings. Two documents included were reviews of the literature relating to remedial education. The results of the studies were very clear: diagnostic-prescriptive instructional approaches produced significant achievement gains with students, while tutoring produced weak or no effect on student achievement.

Specific information from the studies showed the diagnostic-prescriptive approach to be effective in increasing students' retention of instruction and produced greater achievement gains than could have been predicted based on students' previous learning rates. Two studies noted the teacher's skills and organization for instruction as important factors for success with a diagnostic-prescriptive approach. A skills development approach and teaching particular tasks rather than using a “general abilities” approach were recommended in the literature, as well as a citation of “universal agreement...on the need for diagnosis of children's learning difficulties.”

On the other hand, tutorial studies concluded less positive results, such as “regular classroom programs may be equally effective,” “tutored children were not found to be at an advantage on the tests,” “an unstructured tutoring program has a weak effect on achievement,” and “the control group achieved as well as the experimental (tutored) group.” One article cited that, while research has shown that tutoring per se is not necessarily beneficial and that unsystematic approaches to tutoring are ineffective, a structured tutoring program should result in achievement growth. However, there was no documented follow-up of this supposition.

While this research is not intended as iron-clad dictum, the indications for Chapter 1 instruction seem clear. An annotated bibliography citing the specific research studies and summarizing results is available from the Office of Public Instruction Chapter 1 office upon request.

Montana's Chapter 1 Migrant Program

Montana's agricultural industry is a major contributor to the state's economy. Sugar beets, an important crop of the Lower Yellowstone River Valley, are hoed and thinned by migrant agricultural workers who come to Montana in the spring and early summer. These migrant workers and their families travel with the harvest from one state to another.

Because the particular needs of migrant children are not always met by the regular school system, migrant education programs are funded under Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 (ECIA Chapter 1). The Montana Migrant Education Program, like others throughout the nation, provides instructional and support services to these children during their stay in Montana. The program is administered through the Office of Public Instruction in cooperation with each local participating education agency. Fromberg, Billings, Bigfork, Hardin, Hysham, Glendive and Fairview are sites serving the children of migrant workers.

Besides stressing reading and math, the curricula of the migrant program also addresses the special oral language needs of these students. For many of the students, English is a second language while Spanish is their primary tongue. K-6 teachers also provide instruction in career education in order to present students with career exploration of a wide variety of occupations. The children also enjoy art and music activities with the session culminating in an all-grade “Fiesta” which showcases the children's singing and dancing abilities. Because of these children's movement induced needs, the program also provides health, nutrition and preschool services.

The categorical nature of the Migrant Education Program requires an active identification and recruitment effort and the accurate certification of eligibility for every migrant student. Each student is enrolled in the Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS). This system provides a quick and accurate transfer of educational and health records to other school districts or states for each student enrolled.

Though we have the migrant child for a comparatively short time in our summer program, Montana has had a continuing commitment toward creating a positive educational climate and a well-balanced curriculum for these students while they are with us. If you have questions regarding Montana's Migrant Education Program, please contact Angela Branz-Spall, ECIA Chapter 1 Migrant Specialist, through the toll free hot line, 1-800-332-3402.

Chapter 1 Administration

The U.S. Congress has completed and passed the fiscal year 1985 appropriations bill.

The bill, H.R. 6028, was signed by President Reagan on November 9, 1984. This bill provides \$3.7 billion for ECIA Chapter 1 programs. The Chapter 1 program is forward funded by the federal government. This means that the fiscal year 1985 appropriations bill actually provides funds for 1985-86 ECIA Chapter 1 programs. According to estimated counts of low-income children, ages 5-17, the state of Montana should receive a ten percent increase in Chapter 1 funds. Looking at estimated county allocations indicates that some counties will receive the ten percent increase while others will be slightly less or more depending on the October 1984 low-income count for each county. If all necessary low-income data is received in Washington D.C. from all states in a timely manner, we anticipate allocations by March 1, 1985.

As we indicated at the Chapter 1 fall workshops, the project year of 1985-86 will not allow for hold-harmless school districts because of the change of the low-income data base. The base has been changed from the 1970 to 1980 census. Those school districts which do not receive a 1985-86 Chapter 1 allocation may requalify in succeeding project years. Letters will be sent to those school districts which do not have a count of ten low-income children for the month of October 1984. The letters should be in the mail by February 15, 1985.

The Chapter 1 office is working on updating the ECIA Chapter 1 Handbook. We know there will be some changes due to the technical amendments and interpretations of those amendments. It is planned that handbook updates, as well as applications and evaluations, will be available in time for the Chapter 1 spring workshops. It is requested that Chapter 1 administrators and instructors give our office input regarding sections of this handbook which are unclear or additional information which should be included in the handbook.

Ways to Build Recreational Reading

Many children in Chapter 1 programs are reluctant readers and, therefore, are not willing to spend time practicing the skill of reading. Studies have also shown that remedial reading students are given skillwork and short passages to read, but do not have frequent opportunity to develop or practice sustained reading skills through books and longer reading passages. The following activities are suggested to encourage recreational reading.

Bulletin Board Motivators

1. Help Send E.T. Home

Pictures of E.T. and his home are placed on opposite corners of the bulletin board. Round construction paper circles representing Reese's Pieces are used for each book read. The name of the child and the title of the book are printed on the Reese's Piece. The circle is added to the bulletin board each time a child reads a book. Begin placing the circles at the picture of E.T. and continue placing circles on a path to E.T.'s home.

2. Snowed Under with Good Books

Each child draws a self-portrait which should be about one foot tall. When a book is read, the child records the title on a snowball or snowflake and places it on his/her self-portrait. The children enjoy being "buried" with the paper snowballs.

3. Racing to the Bottom

Each child traces a skier, colors it and attaches skis. All skiers begin at the top of the mountain and move down with each book read. When the child's skier reaches the lodge, he/she is rewarded with a cup of hot chocolate.

Motivational Reading Programs

1. Million Minute Reading Challenge

The challenge was proposed by the Central Montana Reading Council and accepted by six communities in central Montana. The goal is to read 1,000,000 minutes from November 30 to April 30. Minutes read by students, parents and school personnel count, and all reading must be conducted outside of school. Thermometer graphs have been posted in the schools, with the official graph in the window of the Montana Power Building in Lewistown.

2. USSR (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading)

The process of USSR is very simple. Students choose something to read; the teacher and other staff members choose something to read; then everyone reads silently without interruption for a specified period of time. USSR can be initiated districtwide, in a single school or in a single classroom.

Questions and Answers

Q. At our school, we serve more than one subject area (i.e., reading and math) in our Chapter 1 program. The weighted scale used for student selection allows for additional points if a student is identified in more than one subject area, thus placing these students high on the prioritized list. Should these students always have priority over those students which are identified in only one subject area?

A. A student should have an equal opportunity to participate in each subject area served regardless of the number of subject areas identified. To ensure this procedure, a separate student selection process must be completed for each subject area served and separate prioritized lists compiled from these results. Students should then be placed in Chapter 1 according to their order of ranking on each prioritized list. This should give all students an equal opportunity for placement by subject area according to their needs. The student selection criteria must be consistent across all subject areas. Refer to page 9 of the *Montana Chapter 1 Handbook* on selecting Chapter 1 students.

Q. Sometimes a student ranks high on the prioritized list, but the classroom teacher does not feel the student needs Chapter 1 services. What documentation is necessary for non-placement?

A. Documentation for non-placement of a student who appears to need Chapter 1 services according to the prioritized list must clearly establish that the student does not need help due to adequate classroom performance or that specialized services are being provided which meet the student's needs. Subjective information, such as teacher opinion and general statements like "doing okay in the classroom," is not adequate. Specific objective information, such as diagnostic test scores, report card grades of "C" or better,

current classroom grades or achievement test scores indicating average or better performance, would be acceptable. Two or more sources of such information should be provided. If an individualized approach to the student's academic needs is being provided by the classroom teacher, such an approach must be described in detail to provide assurance that the student's needs are being met through the alternative program. This alternative program must be supplemental to the regular basal instruction provided all students, and adequate student progress in the alternative program must be demonstrated in the descriptive information. Refer to the *Montana Chapter 1 Handbook*, Section 2, page 13, for information on documentation.

Language Arts Idea: Let's Exchange Student Writing

Strategies for teaching students writing skills today emphasize using a practical or "hands on" approach to writing versus the traditional "grammar, punctuation and parts of speech" approach. One way of involving students in practical writing experiences is through a Chapter 1 newsletter. A Chapter 1 newsletter can contain articles on events around the school and samples of student composition. To provide motivation for the writing and give recognition to the Chapter 1 "authors," the newsletter can be distributed to each classroom and to Chapter 1 parents. The newsletters can also be exchanged between Chapter 1 programs in different areas of Montana. A similar idea to involve students in purposeful writing would be to set up a pen-pal letter exchange between Chapter 1 programs across the state.

Any Chapter 1 program interested in participating in an exchange of student writing can contact the Office of Public Instruction Chapter 1 office. A list of interested projects will be compiled and shared among those districts.

Dorothy Starshine
Chapter 1 Teacher
Helena Middle School

(Based on an article in *NEA Today*, December, 1984)

Montanans to Present at IRA Conference

The International Reading Association will hold its annual conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, May 5-9, 1985. This is the major reading conference held in the United States each year and over 12,000 educators are expected to attend. A special feature of this conference will be a strand of 44 presentations specific to Chapter 1. Three Montana Chapter 1 programs have been selected to make presentations at this conference. These programs are:

1. Bozeman Elementary Chapter 1 program: "BREAK into Reading" Presenters: Donna Ellison and Pam Bredberg.
2. Stevensville Chapter 1 Program: "Integrating Computer-Assisted Instruction with a Diagnostic-Prescriptive Approach" Presenters: Kathy DuFresne and John Snyder.

3. Havre Chapter 1 Program: "Higher Achievement Through Effective Management" Presenters: Dori Nielson and Jim Longin.

Congratulations to these presenters and programs. They will be fine representatives to "showcase" Montana Chapter 1 at a national conference.

Math Idea: Looking at Labels

If students are to become intelligent consumers, they must learn to read and interpret labels on food packages. Labels from actual food products can be used as a source of word problems to develop consumer skills and practice math reasoning and computation skills. Using an actual label, simple questions can be asked such as, what is the name of the product, how much does it weigh, what ingredient is there the most of and how many calories are in one serving. Computation skills can be involved by computing the cost per serving, the number of "dry items" (such as raisins or cookies) in a package based on a per item weight, how many calories there would be in six servings or questions which practice math skills appropriate for the individual student. Using two similar products, comparisons of cost, nutritional composition and other pertinent details can be made.

Arithmetic Teacher
October, 1984

Reading Idea: "The Great Race" in Reading

"The Great Race" is a game similar to the *Family Feud* TV game show. All preparation is done prior to the contest as students complete reading passages assigned by the teacher. The teacher formulates a list of questions based on the week's material. Students are assigned to one of two teams by the teacher, giving each team an equal number of members who have read the same passage. The contest is held on Thursday or Friday. Each contestant has the opportunity to answer three questions based on the material read that week and the teams may pass on a question which neither can answer. Any hints or answers from teammates results in the loss of a point by the culprit's team. An arbitrary goal of 60 points is set and progress is tracked over several weeks on a bulletin board display. An appropriate award is given the members of the team which reaches 60 points first. Students seem to thrive on the spirit of competition that evolves in this activity.

Janet Miller
Chapter 1 Reading Teacher
Hardin Senior High School

Inservice Survey

The Office of Public Instruction Chapter 1 office is considering various inservice options for Chapter 1 instructors in reading, math and language arts. Check as many items as you feel appropriate for your needs.

1. I would like to participate in the following inservice options:

- ☐ A full-day, in-depth workshop on a single topic to be held the day prior to, and at the same site as the state reading and language arts conference in October, 1985.
- ☐ Specific Chapter 1 instructional sessions to be conducted as part of state reading and language arts conference in October, 1985.
- ☐ Specific Chapter 1 instructional sessions to be conducted as part of the state math conference in October, 1985.
- ☐ Half-day Chapter 1 instructional workshop in your region of the state (within approximately 100 miles of your district).
- ☐ As in previous years, regional Chapter 1 workshops held at two or three sites throughout the state, lasting one and one-half days.
- ☐ I suggest the following inservice option: _____

2. I would like inservice on the following topics:

- ☐ reading diagnosis and prescription
- ☐ written language diagnosis and prescription
- ☐ math diagnosis and prescription
- ☐ developing written language skills
- ☐ teaching reading comprehension
- ☐ teaching math story problems and application skills
- ☐ teaching content reading skills
- ☐ teaching study skills
- ☐ using the language experience approach to teach reading
- ☐ integrating reading and written language instruction
- ☐ I suggest the following inservice topic: _____

3. Comments, Questions and/or Concerns: _____

Please return this survey to Linda Thompson, Chapter 1 Specialist, Office of Public Instruction, Capitol Station, Helena MT 59620.

from The Reading Teacher's Coloring Book

